



Civil Air Patrol  
US Air Force Auxiliary

**Florida Wing  
Headquarters**

# Aerospace Education Briefing

**Subject:** Aerospace Education Excellence (AEX) Program  
**Initiated By:** Maj Linda Trimpey, External AE Officer  
**Directed To:** All AE Members

**Date:** 18 Oct 04  
**AEB No.:** 04-0002



## **HIGHLANDS COUNTY COMPOSITE SQUADRON**

Civil Air Patrol  
United States Air Force Auxiliary  
Florida Wing SER-FL-314  
P.O. Box 4162  
Sebring, Florida 33875-4162

13 Oct 2004

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** LINDA TRIMPEY  
**FROM:** LEA ANN CURRY, Capt, CAP  
AEO

**REGARDING:** AEROSPACE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Our squadron participated in the AEX II program January through June, 2004.

As part of the planning for participation, I gave a lot of thought as to using this program as a tool to bridge the all too often gap that develops between Cadets and Seniors in squadrons. I did not want to use the program as a competition between the two groups. I, also, wanted the program to educational beyond the projects and to be fun.

I decided that the program itself was the tool that determined the interaction between the two groups. I carefully choose the projects that were used and kept a keen eye on cost.

The first project was “Lost on the Moon”. It is a great project that develops a “team” approach. The project also allowed the cadet and senior team members to share knowledge and ideas without threatening either member. After explaining the project and handing out the materials, I observed a slow cautious interaction develop between the squadron members. However, by the end of the given time, I observed team members discussing chemistry, flight/aerodynamics, atmospheric conditions, gravity and many more topics. Cadet team members were the presenters of their inventory. Questions were allowed and cadets with the aid of their senior counterparts provided their opinions on why they would take certain items.

There ideas put forth that other teams scoffed at but in the end some of those “far out ideas” were really well thought out and were correct. One idea particularly, I had heard a cadet express to his senior counterpart and I watched as the senior member thought about the cadets idea and then I observed the two of them put their heads together and in the end they defended their idea during their presentation. They were scoffed at – until in the end when I read the NASA list – they were correct. Their explanation of their idea was exactly what NASA said.

After that first project cadets and seniors, alike, wanted to know what the next project would be and they wanted to pre-prepare. Each project that followed built camaraderie between cadets and seniors.

Each new project had to be looked at to determine how it could be expanded to include seniors sharing life experiences and cadets feeling comfortable sharing the comparison of history shared by the seniors with the world they live in today. Seniors needed to listen and to learn as much as the cadets.

There was only one project in which the cadets did something on their own and that was building the HyperX-43. However, even then the senior team members made certain to be available to assist. This project was assigned three months before it was due. Cadets understood that they would build the aircraft and that senior members would be asking questions about the HyperX-43 program and the aerodynamics of the models the cadet built.

Our final project was much more successful than I had hoped for. This time there was open competition between everyone. The project called for each participant to land a model airplane on a runway. I took the project a few steps further: I used newspaper print to make a runway with buildings, AVGAS tanks, autos parked in lots, and lakes. Everyone was given three attempts to land the aircraft safely. We then had one of our seniors talk about landing on an aircraft carrier and we then made a mark on the runway that indicated where everyone had to land to be caught by the net on an aircraft carrier. Not too many were successful on their first two tries but most landed “safely” by the fourth try. Squadron members were also informed about General Aviation “Fly Ins” where the dropping of flour bags is an event. The closest wins a prize.

By the end of each evening there existed no division lines between cadets and seniors . . . and this has continued. Cadets are comfortable with their “team members” and often speak with them regarding questions or “non-CAP things”.

Our community Education event was very interesting and fun. Cadets went on line and found paper airplane patterns and each learned to fold and fly over 5 different models. They taught community members about the aerodynamics of each aircraft and how to fold the aircraft. Community members also viewed a static display of RC models brought in by the Aero modeler’s organization within the county. Community members flew their aircraft and observed as the cadets flew their “Goddard Rockets”. Within the squadron we had a competition, in which members were allowed to choose three different aircraft models to fold and fly. We had distances marked and each flight was measured. We flew for distance and accuracy. The day was a success.

Planning these projects for both cadets and seniors was challenging! However, when I see the outcome, it was well worth it. I have both cadet and senior members asking when we will start the program again.

The program is excellent but with a little more planning and thought much more can be obtained by each and every participant. But as AEO, you must determine what it is that you want from the program for your squadron.

I used the AEX II Program as a stepping stone to a “Mentoring Program” within our squadron. Many of the seniors did not understand about the cadet program and were unable to identify the cadet’s grades. The cadets did not know the senior program and there was a gap between the two groups. In our mentoring program, seniors now spend an hour each meeting mentoring the cadets with leadership or aerospace education. Cadet testing has improved and each group now understands the cadet/senior program.

The AEX II Program opens many doors for squadron members.

Good luck but most important - ENJOY